

INTRODUCTION.

the offerings made to them, in gratifying their bodily wants, and from the praises which impart to them enhanced energy and augmented power. There is nothing, however, which denotes any particular potency in the prayer, or hymn, so as to compel the gods to comply with the desires of the worshipper ; — nothing of that enforced necessity -which makes so conspicuous and characteristic a figure in the Hindu mythology of a later date, by which the performance of austerities for a continued period constrains the gods to grant the desired boon, although fraught with peril, and even destruction, to themselves.

The next question is : "Who are the gods to whom the praises and prayers are addressed ? And here, we find, also, a striking difference between the mythology of the '*Rig-Veda*' and that of the heroic poems and '*Purnas*'. The divinities worshipped are not unknown to later systems : but they there perform very subordinate parts ; whilst those deities who are the great gods — the *Dii majores* — of the subsequent period are either wholly unnamed in the *Veda*, or are noticed in an inferior and different capacity. The 'names of

S'IVA, Of IT A FADE VA, **of DURGA, of Kiil, of**

KAMA, of

EjEiSHNAj never occur, as far as we are yet aware. We have a ETJBKA, who, in after times, is identified with S'IVA, but who, even in the *Purdnas*[^] is of very doubtful origin and identification, whilst, in the *Veda*, he is described as the father of the winds, and is, evidently, a form of either AGNI or IISPDBA. The epithet KAPAR-DIK, which is applied to him, appears, indeed, to have some relation to a characteristic attribute of SIVA, —